

Iran wins world deaf futsal title



● IRNA

Sports Desk

Iran lifted the men's trophy in the World Deaf Futsal Championships in Sao Paulo, Brazil, thanks to a shootout victory over Sweden.

Alireza Mokhtar-Abadi was on the scoresheet for Iran as the two sides settled for a 1-1 draw before heading into the shootout.

Goalkeeper Mahdi Karam-Ali delivered a heroic performance by denying three Swedish efforts, while Mokhtar-Abadi, Esmaeil Deje, and Ali-Akbar Ahmadvand converted from the spot as Iran won the title in the fifth edition of the tournament.

Having beaten the Czech Republic 7-0 in the quarterfinals, Iran demolished Thailand 9-1 – courtesy of Ali Zeinalvand's hat-trick, Mokhtar-Abadi's double, as well as strikes by Karam-Ali, Mostafa Heidari, Amir-Hossein Abdollahi, and Mohammad Jahangiri – for a place in the final showpiece.

Japan defeated Thailand 3-2 to finish on the third podium.

Iran's Geraei to miss Olympics after one-year ban

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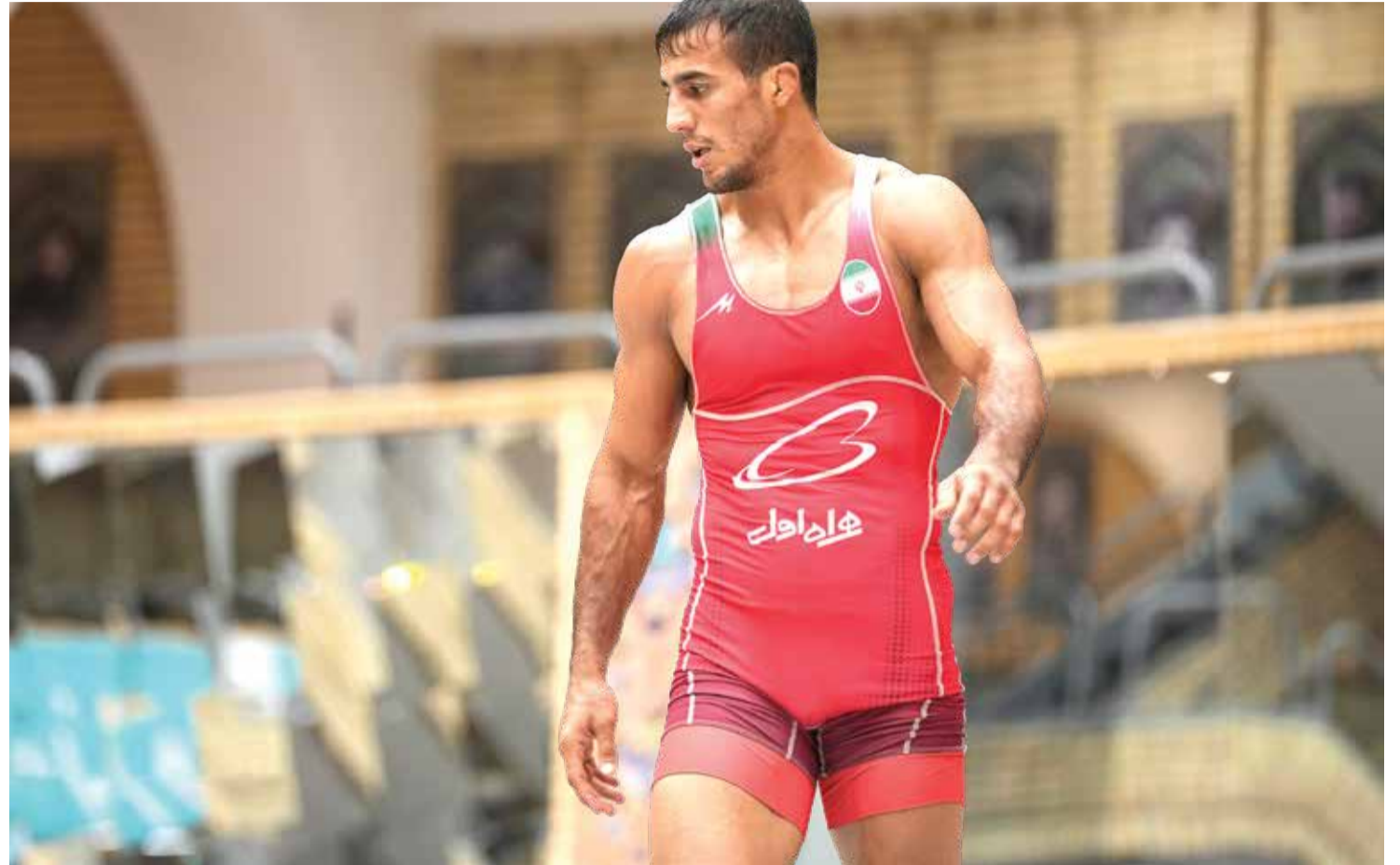
Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammad-Ali Geraei was handed a 12-month ban by the United World Wrestling due to an incident at September's World Championships in Belgrade. Geraei was also fined 1,000 Swiss franc, with the Iranian Wrestling Federation also receiving a 5,000 Swiss franc penalty.

The UWW's decision means the three-time world bronze winner will be ruled out of the Olympic qualification tournaments in the coming months and the main event in Paris itself – starting July next year.

The Japan Wrestling Federation had lodged a complaint over the Iranian's misconduct during a 67kg bout featuring his younger Mohammadreza and Kyotaro Sogabe of Japan in the Serbian capital.

Mohammadreza had a 10-9 advantage over the Japanese but was clearly out of breath with 1:15 minutes left on the clock, when his older brother, who had been knocked out of the 77kg contests earlier, threw a bottle of mineral water on the mat to halt the bout, presumably buying the Iranian some time to restore strength.

A world and Olympic champion in 2021, Mohammadreza held on for an 11-10 victory but a technical-fall humiliation against Azerbaijani Hasrat



● iwfir

Javarov in the quarterfinals saw the Iranian eventually settle for a bronze medal.

A third world medal in as many years was still enough for Mohammadreza to secure a berth at next year's Games in the French capital. Mohammad-Ali, 29, was the captain of the Iranian six-man squad at the

Olympics two years ago, where he delivered some impressive performances but was unlucky to leave Tokyo empty-handed after a defeat against the host's Shohei Yabiku in the bronze medal contest.

Iran Greco-Roman head coach Hassan Rangraz lamented the UWW verdict

as being "harsh", adding: "We were hoping he could finish his career with an Olympic medal." Meanwhile, Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian federation, said the country would lodge an appeal to reduce the wrestler's ban.

In Geraei's absence, Amin Kavianinejad – a two-time

world junior champion and a silver winner in October's Asian Games – will be the likely frontrunner in Iran's quest for the Olympic quota, though he will have to win the domestic championships next month before competing in the qualification events.

Iran has already bagged

four of the six Greco-Roman quotas for Olympics after Amin Mirzazadeh won the 130kg gold in Belgrade, coupled with the 67kg and 97kg bronze medals for Mohammadreza Geraei and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi, while Mahdi Mohsennejad finished fifth in the 60kg weight class.

Verstappen battles through to win Las Vegas GP thriller

AFP – World champion Max Verstappen claimed the 18th win of his record-breaking season, overcoming a five-second penalty to power to victory in a thrilling Las Vegas Grand Prix on Saturday.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc overtook Red Bull's Sergio Perez on the last lap to grab second place ahead of the Mexican with French driver Esteban Ocon of Alpine finishing fourth at the end of a race which saw multiple lead changes and plenty of overtaking.

Verstappen had been highly critical of the return of Formula One to Vegas after a 41-year absence, saying the event was "99 percent show", but as he drove past the finish line he celebrated with a chorus of "Viva Las Vegas" on the team radio.

"He loves a race like that. Even though he was on the end of a penalty. When he came back...the way he fought. I think he changed his mind about Vegas," said Red Bull team principal Christian Horner.

The Dutchman won by 2.070 over Leclerc but had to work for his victory in what was the latest starting race in F1 history.

"It was a tough one. I tried to go for it at the start. We both braked quite late and I just ran out of grip, so we ended up a bit wide," said the triple world champion.

"The stewards gave me a penalty for that and it put us on the back-foot. I had to pass quite a few cars and there was the Safety Car, so at that point there was a lot going on,"



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates winning the Las Vegas Grand Prix in Las Vegas, NV, US, on Nov. 18, 2023.
● FINN BLAKE/REUTERS

added Verstappen, summing up the race as "a lot of fun." The Dutchman, starting second on the grid, grabbed the lead in the first turn of the opening lap but was penalised five seconds for pushing Leclerc wide.

The tricky surface was evident when McLaren's Lando Norris crashed out, spinning into the barrier on turn 14 of the fourth lap. The British driver was taken to hospital for precautionary tests.

Ferrari's Monegasque driver Leclerc kept in close touch though and was able to get the lead back, overtaking Verstappen on lap 16.

The Dutchman had to serve his penalty in the pit, leaving him plenty of work to do to regain his lead and when Leclerc went into the pits on lap 22, Perez took over at the front.

Mercedes' George Russell made contact with Verstappen, clipping his front wing, an incident which resulted in a five second penalty for the British driver who crossed the line fourth but ended in eighth place. Leclerc and Perez jostled for the lead but Verstappen was ominously gaining ground and after he passed Perez he then made his decisive move on lap 37.

From then on, Verstappen never looked back, Leclerc slipping into third spot after he out-braked himself and allowed Perez to fly by.

But there was one more twist in the tale as Leclerc brilliantly moved past Perez to grab second place. "What a race. I enjoyed it so much. I'm of course disappointed to only finish second, but that's the best we could do," said Leclerc.

Turkey stun Euro 2024 hosts Germany, spoil Nagelsmann's home debut

REUTERS – Visitors Turkey shocked Euro 2024 hosts Germany 3-2 in a friendly on Saturday to spoil coach Julian Nagelsmann's home debut after taking the job in September.

The Germans, racing to get a strong team together for next year's tournament on home soil, still have a way to go and their leaking defence remains a major cause for concern.

The Turks, already qualified for Euro 2024, looked sharp with thousands of their fans in the Olympic stadium, but the hosts eased off after a strong start and an early lead, and the result will do little to fuel German fans' expectations for the tournament next year.

Nagelsmann, who took over from Hansi Flick, enjoyed a winning debut in October away to the United States before drawing against Mexico.

"We should have finished off the game in the first 10 minutes," Nagelsmann said. "But from the 25th minute and until the break we did not do much.



● FABRIZIO BENSCH/REUTERS

The Germans took a fifth-minute lead when attacking midfielder Kai Havertz, unusually deployed as a left back, converted a Leroy Sane cut-back in front of a sold-out 70,000 crowd.

Sane came close to scoring himself when he saw Turkey keeper Altay Bayindir out of position but his low drive sailed narrowly wide. The visitors made the most of a string of defensive errors to hit back and they cut the deficit through Ferdi Kadioglu's powerful shot after he latched on to a deep cross from Abdulkerim Bardakci in the 38th

minute. Turkey drew level through former Bayern Munich youth player Kenan Yildiz in first-half stoppage time after the 18-year-old was left completely unmarked at the far post.

Niclas Füllkrug levelled three minutes after the restart with a low shot following Florian Wirtz's solo run for his 10th goal in 12 internationals for Germany but the Turks refused to settle for a draw.

Salih Özcan hit the post and they earned a 70th-minute penalty for a handball by Havertz which Yusuf Sari converted.